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PHOTO BY CAI INA JULIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

LOOKING FORWARD

A stunning modern design in the heart of Buckhead comes together thanks to Plexus R+D.

*By Lauren Finney Harden
Photographed by
Galina Juliana Photography*



A modern oasis by Plexus R+D on Rilman Road sits sentry.



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From left: A floating staircase adds function without taking up space; all rooms, including the living room, look inward toward the pool courtyard.

Known for a range of clients including Bartaco, Cruz & Associates and Delia's Chicken Sausage Stand, Plexus R+D captures attention on an international stage. But working on projects right here at home—one of which is a private residence created for a couple they met during—what else—the Design is Human Atlanta modern architecture tour put on by MA!—gives the team just as much pleasure.

Says Jordan Williams, a principal of Plexus R+D, "The client visited a house in Ansley Park during a modern architecture tour. We met them in the house during the tour and gave them a personal tour. Within a week or two, they called and wanted to work together. The whole tour format helped connect us." With the stamp of approval—plus an up-close-and-personal view of what the firm can produce—it was go time.

The starting point was uniquely different from the toured home. "The clients really liked the idea that the first house [they had toured] looked almost like it was communing with nature, rather than addressing the street like a normal house would in a suburb," says Williams. "The project was established on similar ideas, but it wasn't as large of a piece of property. We couldn't push the house back far enough to give it that sense of separation and seclusion. We developed more of a sectional separation and then created an emphasis on the interior pool courtyard," he says. "In all



The continuity between exterior and interior materials creates a seamlessness. Opposite page, from top: The Poggenpohl kitchen was designed by John Coulter; Williams calls the master bathroom an "evolution," with a bit of back and forth over whether a landscape screen wall would suffice for privacy. At one point it wouldn't, but the homeowners went back to the firm's original design idea of a full glass window.

of the spaces in the house, the energy is drawn inward as opposed to out toward the exterior."

It's a common theme: "In all our homes, we try as much as possible to erase the distinction between inside and outside," Williams says. "In this home, a lot of materials that are used on the exterior pass right through into the interior with large pieces of glass that allow people from both outside and inside to see the continuity."

"It's almost a tension between the two—where we take the most interesting attributes of those two forces and bring them together to see how they produce something that's engaging and maybe not exactly what you expected from the friction created, to develop something innovative," he continues.

Williams acknowledges that the design was unique for a place like Atlanta. "Most homes don't wrap around the courtyard, and don't take an exterior space and put it at the heart of the house. Typically, you'll have a great room or a family room as the focus of the house. In this case, we unfolded



that series of public spaces and created more of a linear sequence that wrapped around the courtyard and pool.”

The team took their time, not only because the home was large and complex, but “because we care a lot and spend as much time as we can designing,” he says. “We do a computer model that’s a virtual replica of the house so the owner can see the spaces inside and out; we source the best materials that meet the client’s budget. And,” he says with a laugh, “permitting in the city of Atlanta is a challenge.”

Modern design, as striking as it is here, comes with challenges, which the firm was ready to hit head-on. “On traditional houses, I don’t even think they look at drawings,” says Williams. “But on modern homes with steel structures, they treat it more like a commercial project. The permitting can take four or five months, easily.”

Other challenges arose with sourcing. As opposed to other places where modern is more common, resources are less available here. “For example, we have some flat block the same panel as the exterior, and that’s not a very common thing in residential construction. I can’t think of any other than this one that I’ve seen. That required commercial subcontractors and helping the general contractor find the trades capable of executing the work, as well as dealing with vendors across the country to measure and deliver in the expected way.”







Plexus R+D has an eye toward sustainability, with Williams noting, "We source products that are incredibly durable," such as the exterior stone, the zinc panel and even the thermally modified wood siding, which require less maintenance than other materials.

The home also evolved as the process went on, with Williams acknowledging that part of their process is to be a design think tank. "We're open to anyone in the office at any given time walking up and looking at what we're doing and saying, 'Hey, I have a better idea.' We challenge the idea that a project is created solely by one author, and welcome feedback as much as possible."

Four years later, the homeowners were able to move into their brand-new, mindfully designed home. Furniture is almost exclusively from Minotti, which outfitted the homeowners' previous home, with other modern brands like Porcelanosa and Hansgrohe in heavy rotation. A kitchen from Poggenpohl adds quiet elegance. For Plexus R+D, it was a labor of love, but for these homeowners, it's a unique respite. ■

DESIGN DETAILS

RESIDENCE

Single-family home

LOCATION

Buckhead

DESIGNER AND ARCHITECT

Plexus R+D
plexus-rd.com

BUILDER

Principle Builders Group
principlebuildersgroup.com

PORCELANOSA

Flooring specialty tile in Mutina,
master bathroom tub
porcelanosa-usa.com

MINOTTI BY HA MODERN

Furniture, lighting and rugs
throughout
minotti.com; hamodern.com

HANSGROHE

Axor Starck organic
bathroom fixtures
hansgrohe-usa.com

POGGENPOHL

Kitchen
poggenpohl.com